

**ABSTRACT**

A pack (P) of slabs is formed by positioning successive layers of ornamental slabs of stone alternating with supplementary layers of slabs in succession on a support base (10). A liquid-tight container (C) is then formed around the pack (P) with a peripheral space left around the edges of the layers. The container (C) is then subjected to a vacuum and a settable fluid binder is introduced into the container that the binder fills the whole of the peripheral space, penetrates the gaps between the slabs, and covers the pack of slabs. The vacuum is then released and the binder is permitted to set to produce a consolidated pack of slabs in a block in which the faces of the block corresponding to the edges of the layers are covered by a hermetic covering of binder. The block is then cut to produce composite panels.